

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY VIENNA

UNCLAS STATE 087667

FOLLOWING REPEAT SECSTATE 087667 SENT ACTION ALL NATO
CAPITALS APRIL 29,

QUOTE

UNCLAS STATE 087667

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, MCAF, NATO

SUBJECT: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE ON TACTICAL NUCLEAR
WEAPONS DATED APRIL 25

1. ON APRIL 25 NEW YORK TIMES CARRIED AN ARTICLE BY
JOHN FINNEY ALLEGING QUOTE DEFENSE SECRETARY JAMES R.
SCHLESINGER IS PLANNING ON REDUCING THE SIZABLE STOCKPILE
OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN EUROPE AS WELL AS CUTTING BACK ON
THE NUMBER OF ATOMIC-ARMED MISSILES AND PLANES KEPT ON
ALERT. UNQUOTE.

2. THIS ARTICLE DOES NOT PROPERLY REPRESENT SECRETARY
SCHLESINGER'S VIEWS. THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE IS
ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON THIS SUBJECT BY USING THE EXACT
LANGUAGE OF THE SECRETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE AT GRAFENWOHR
ON APRIL 19 AS FOLLOWS:

Q: AGAIN, YOU HAVE BEEN QUOTED AS SAYING TO A
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CONGRESSIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE THAT THERE MIGHT BE A

CONSIDERATION OF WITHDRAWING SOME OF THE 7,000 TACTICAL NUCLEAR WARHEADS IN EUROPE UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, WHAT ARE SOME OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES YOU CAN THINK OF?

A: THE REPORT THAT WAS IN THE PRESS ON THAT LEFT OUT SOME OF THE NUANCES. I SHOULD STRESS THAT I INDICATED THAT OUR

TACTICAL NUCLEAR POSTURE IN EUROPE WAS NOT IMMUTABLE. NON-IMMUTABILITY PERMITS ADJUSTMENTS TO MEET NEW REQUIREMENTS. I ALSO STRESSED THAT ANY ADJUSTMENTS IN THAT POSTURE WOULD HAVE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC SIGNIFICANCE AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY ADJUSTMENTS IN OUR POSTURE WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN IN CONSULTATION WITH OUR ALLIES, AND ALLIES PARTICULARLY THAT HAD SENSITIVE FEELINGS ON SUCH MATTERS. THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH ADJUSTMENTS MAY BE MADE ARE THE ALTERATION IN THE VULNERABILITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE WEAPONS IN THE NUCLEAR STOCKPILE. AS FOR EXAMPLE, WE INTRODUCED THE LANCE WHICH HAS A REDUCED VULNERABILITY AND INCREASED EFFECTIVENESS. IT MAY BE THAT WE WOULD HAVE TO STUDY THE MATTER. IT MAY BE ESTABLISHED THAT THE PRESENT STOCKPILE OF ROUGHLY 7,000 WEAPONS IS LARGER THAN OPTIMAL. THERE ARE CERTAIN CLASSES OF WEAPONS IN EUROPE THAT MAY HAVE REACHED THE STAGE IN WHICH THEY'RE OBSOLESCEANT OR QUASI-OBSOLESCEANT.

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT THAT I WOULD STRESS IN RESPONDING TO THIS PARTICULAR QUESTION IS THAT IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE ALLIANCE AND THE ALLIES TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN EACH OTHER AND TO MAKE THE ADJUSTMENTS IN POSTURE WHICH ARE DICTATED OR ENCOURAGED BY MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS ON AN ALLIANCE-WIDE BASIS. I THINK THAT THERE HAS BEEN AND PERHAPS UNDERSTANDABLY, CONCERN WITHIN THE ALLIANCE, AMONGST THE ALLIES, SO THAT ANY CHANGE BECOMES SUBJECT OF INTROSPECTION ABOUT THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF THAT CHANGE.

THE PURPOSE OF THE UNITED STATES IN MAINTAINING A TACTICAL NUCLEAR POSTURE IN EUROPE IS TO AUGMENT AS EFFECTIVELY AS IT CAN THE OVERALL DETERRENCE WITHIN THE ALLIANCE, AND UNCLASSIFIED

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AT THE SAME TIME WITHIN THE TACTICAL NUCLEAR COMPONENT, TO HAVE AN EFFECTIVE FORCE STRUCTURE. THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE IN THAT PURPOSE. WHETHER THERE'S AN ADJUSTMENT OF 100 WEAPONS UP OR DOWN SHOULD BE LOOKED AT IN TERMS OF ITS MILITARY IMPACT RATHER THAN PN TERMS OF THE SYMBOLIC AND POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES. I THINK THAT WE WILL HAVE A FAR MORE HEALTHY ALLIANCE UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES.

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